

February 11, 2003

Kenneth Hanner, National Editor  
The Washington Times  
3600 New York Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Hanner,

We are compelled to respond to Mr. Lakely's story in yesterday's edition of *The Washington Times*. While we respect your need to file a follow-up story on this investigation, any objective analysis of this story would deem it as unfair and unbalanced for the following reasons:

- The primary focus of the news story – the excessiveness of “600 pages of documents” submitted to Senator Grassley's office – is highly subjective. In fact, less than 25 of the 600 pages were not specifically requested by Senator Grassley's office. Given this, the size of our report wouldn't appear unreasonable to an objective reviewer. Furthermore, your story describes Senator Grassley's questions as “lengthy and detailed,” so why would anyone expect our responses to be short? In fact, the 24 questions contained over 200 individual questions that we answered in a 61-page document. Only the transmittal letter was one page.
- Your use of an unnamed source in the 14<sup>th</sup> paragraph of the story is unethical and unnecessary.
- The tone of Mr. Lakely's news story implies that this agency is not cooperating with Senator Grassley's investigation. This is patently untrue. Moreover, the story unfairly includes a long list of accusations from unnamed sources. You and Mr. Lakely are welcome to review our response to Senator Grassley, which counters all of these questions.
- The “team-building” exercises and “values-oriented” management used by the agency are also practiced by many Fortune 500 companies. Before our agency's management practices are ridiculed and attacked, shouldn't your reporting include some perspective on current management techniques?

- As we explained to Mr. Lakely last week, Mrs. Corcoran was unable to speak with him because of the ongoing PCIE/ECIE investigation. This is common protocol. Yet, his story failed to mention this fact.
- *The Washington Times* also failed to mention any of the successes that this agency has achieved. Since the establishment of the agency in 1996, the agency has identified \$2.2 billion in costs savings, cost avoidance and cost recovery for the United States Postal Service.
- The allegations contained in the last paragraph of the article are incorrect. Additionally, this is the first time we have heard these allegations. To include such unsubstantiated allegations, and not even be given an opportunity to respond also calls into question the fairness and balance of this article.

Our expectation in working with *The Washington Times* is that the reporting would be objective and responsible. However, this story falls far short of these standards and, consequently, damages the reputation of the Postal Service and the Office of the Inspector General. We have done nothing illegal, immoral, or unethical; there has been no violation of statute, regulation, or policy. In fact, we have used the statutes, regulations, and policies as a minimum standard. We have gone beyond these standards to protect the integrity of this office. We are an open book and welcome the opportunity to set the record straight – yet again.

Sincerely,

Laura A. Whitaker  
Director, Public Relations

cc: James G. Lakely, *The Washington Times*